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negotiate and modify VLAs more rapidly in response to changing market conditions. The role of the corporate reseller 130 may be sharply reduced, if not completely eliminated, by facilitating the direct communication between the publisher 110 and corporate customer 140. The integration of the management of VLAs with electronic commerce in a user-friendly way presents a unique set of challenges, requiring a new and novel solution.

A3
Please replace the paragraph from page 6, line 10 to page 7, line 7 with:

Referring now to **Figure 3**, wherein a block diagram illustrating the functional components of the AVLA method and apparatus are shown. The functional components include an AVLA rules engine 310, an AVLA pricing monitor 320, an AVLA purchaser interface 330, and an AVLA transaction database 340. Some of the functions performed by the AVLA rules engine 310 include accessing the VLAs pulled from the AVLA Clearinghouse 210, and extracting and maintaining the rules for automating the VLA, including, for example, the points credited for each product offered under the VLA, the number of points required for each discount step, and the percentage discount associated with each discount step. Some of the functions performed by the AVLA pricing monitor 320 include accessing the historical purchasing data for a requested product, determining whether the discount step is current, and modifying the discount step, if necessary, in conjunction with the AVLA rules engine 310 and the historical purchasing data. In one embodiment, another function of the AVLA rules engine is to further determine whether discount pricing is available based on a profile of the AVLA client/user 260 requesting the product, to insure that only the appropriate AVLA client/users 260 are able to view and purchase products at that discounted price. Some of the functions performed by the AVLA purchaser interface 330 include obtaining the current discount step from the AVLA pricing monitor 320, and dynamically calculating and displaying the current price of a product in response to a purchase request by a AVLA client/user 260. The AVLA purchaser interface 330 is also responsible for maintaining the historical purchase data on the AVLA transaction database 340 for each product purchased under a VLA, and for facilitating the transaction of the purchase in response to a request by a AVLA client/user 260.

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Please replace the paragraph on page 8, lines 12-26 with:

Referring now to **Figure 4**, wherein a block diagram of a general-purpose computer system upon which an embodiment of the present invention may be implemented is shown. As illustrated, general-purpose computer system 400 comprises a bus 401, or other communications hardware and software, for communicating information, and a processor 402 coupled with bus 401 for processing information. Computer system 400 further comprises a random access memory (RAM) or other dynamic storage device 402 (referred to as main memory), coupled to bus 401 for storing information and instructions to be executed by processor 405. Computer system 400 also comprises a read only memory (ROM) 403, and/or other static storage device, coupled to bus 401 for storing static information and instructions for processor 405. Mass storage device 404 is coupled to bus 401 for storing information and instructions. In one embodiment, mass storage device 404 includes a library of historical purchasing data and VLA rules used to automate the VLA under which the products are purchased by the various AVLA client/users 260.

Please replace the paragraph on page 12, lines 1-15 with: